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Women leadership and their experience of internal identity asymmetry at workplace



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ABSTRACT

Individuals at the workplace have a lasting interest in how others perceive them and a core desire for others to assert and verify their salient work-related identities. Internal identity asymmetry is encountered when an individual feels misidentified; when they think their work-related identities are not recognized by their peers. This article based on previous literature about women leadership and their experience of Internal Identity at the workplace. Although there is no concrete theory to explain this concept accordingly in this article, we attempt to investigate the concept of internal identity asymmetry with related theories combined. Subsequently, we addressed how women get misidentified and deduce the consequences of experiences of Internal Identity Asymmetry at the workplace. The current study is a conceptual paper and therefore, contributes freshness to this existing literature by integrating the concept of internal Identity asymmetry and women leadership thus, the model can be empirically tested in future research.

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Introduction

Individuals are interested and concerned about how others see them (Swann Jr, 1983) in the social context, organizational workgroups and have devoted significant time and energy to influence the perceptions of others with their self-views (Burke & Stets, 1999; Elsbach, 2004) 2004). These social identity processes extremely influence their behavior within organizations; they're relatively unknown yet in management research (Meister, Jehn, & Thatcher, 2012; Swann Jr, Johnson, & Bosson, 2009).

Individuals want to recognize their important identities by coworkers and important others (Longmire, 1992; W. B. Swann, 1996) at different hierarchical levels. 'Others' whose opinions and ideas, actually matter a lot, should be relevant to the individual so they can have an accurate understanding of their identities (E. T. Higgins, 1987; E Tory Higgins, Bond, Klein, & Strauman, 1986). For example, a person does not seem concerned or keen about a stranger they simply meet by the way into the workplace because he does not interpret our identities accurately (Meister et al., 2012). The degree to which the relative importance of one's identities are recognized by important 'Others' is defined under Identity comprehension (Thatcher & Greer, 2008) which helps individuals to recognize the identities that are essential or unessential.

The internal perceptions and tensions, how we see ourselves and thinking of how others see us, despite how actually they see us (Oltmanns, Gleason, Klonsky, & Turkheimer, 2005), plays an important role in our social behaviour (E. T. Higgins, 1987). Internal identity asymmetry described as an intra-individual tension faced by individuals in workgroups (Meister et al., 2012) has not yet been thoroughly explored in previous organizational group research (Swann Jr et al., 2009).

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The concept of asymmetry involves misalignment of perceptions without predetermination whether or not experience is harmful — asymmetries can be interpreted as either negative or positive, and this assessment of value can influence differential outcomes (Meister, Jehn, & Thatcher, 2014). Individuals believe that they experience asymmetry exist at work, despite whether it exists in reality or not. This perceived misalignment enlightens the need to re-negotiate one's self-identities with oneself or with the other, in order to decrease discrepancies (or disagreement) and to achieve congruence (Swann Jr et al., 2009; Swann Jr, Rentfrow, & Guinn, 2003). Therefore, while working at a job, individuals may come to believe that how they are seen by colleagues is inconsistent with whom they actually are. This experience is defined as internal identity asymmetry—the belief that one's identity is mistaken (Meister et al., 2014). Our beliefs about what others think of us have been shown to strongly influence on our behavior and interactions (Burns & Vollmeyer, 1998; Barry R Schlenker, 1980; B. R. Schlenker & Leary, 1982) when examining identity asymmetry, it is thus critical to consider, this from the perspective of the individual. Individuals are being encouraged to monitor their perception actively so that their peers, subordinates and clients can develop, manage, and maintain positive impressions (Peters, 1997; Ulrich & Smallwood, 2007), and compliance with their organization or group identities (Patricia Faison Hewlin, 2003; P. F. Hewlin, 2009).

It is important for leaders in the organizational context to understand how others perceive them at work. According to previous management literature, leaders have to create, present, and manage their leadership identities (Goffee & Jones, 2005; Irvine & Reger, 2006; Sinclair, 2013), with the feedback tools give to leaders an understanding into how others see them (Zenger, Folkman, & Edinger, 2011).

Modern leaders are compelled to acknowledge how they are perceived, therefore Leaders become more focused on how they consider and manage these perceptions at work. It is important for leaders and employees alike to understand how self-perceptions, and perceptions of how others see them, might influence their effect and behaviour within their workgroups (Meister et al., 2012). Research has shown that in male-dominated professions, people are judged by their agent behaviors (such as speaking assertively, being aggressive, and influencing others) (Madera, Hebl, & Martin, 2009), and female managers still denounce subtle means of discrimination in the workplace (Ely & Rhode, 2010). Women in a leadership role have to face additional challenges like considered a less favorable candidate for a leadership role and they are being judged more at the workplace (A. H. Eagly & Karau, 2002; Ragins & Winkel, 2011), with respect to navigating and managing the perceptions of others. Women leaders face a competence tradeoff between being assertive and authoritative in exerting power and conforming to conventional stereotypes of women, such as, being judged to be efficient too masculine and not pleasant and to be considered likeable yet ineffective and ambitious (Babcock, Laschever, Gelfand, & Small, 2003; A. H. Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Meister, Sinclair, and Jehn (2017) explore that women's leaders' experience of feeling misidentified throughout their careers by their peers. This feeling of misidentification is experienced when one's believes that others attribute to him/her inaccurate and unwanted identities and neglects identities that may be extremely relevant him/her, are known as 'Internal identity asymmetry' (Meister et al., 2014). This is grounded in research that indicates that the perceptions of an individual of an event drive the response (Homan, van Knippenberg, Van Kleef, & De Dreu, 2007; Jehn, Rispens, & Thatcher, 2010).

We contribute to this study in several ways. First, we bring together all previous literature to introduce the concept of internal identity asymmetry, an individual's belief that they are misidentified by their colleagues, based on past theories and research of identity, self-verification, self-discrepancy and impression management literature. Second, we draw on previous literature to outline the various ways an individual might cope with asymmetry and explore consequences and conditions under when it is resolved or maintained at the workplace. Thirdly with the help of previous studies, this study explores the consequences of the experience of asymmetry by women leaders. Finally, according to previous research through lights on the factors that influence the asymmetry and it can result increased or decreased way and Conceptual model is also suggested for future implication.

Literature Review

Work-related identities & perception of asymmetry at workplace

We adapt to the definition of identity as subjective knowledge, meanings, and experiences which together define an individual (Gecas, 1982; Ramarajan, 2014). Identity is an individual's answer to the questions from "Who am I?" to "who are you" towards "who we are". In other words, an individual may define him or herself on several levels of self-construction (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). There are a number of ways an individual might respond to Who am I. Individual identities include interpersonal or societal roles based upon duties i.e. parent, wife, physician, or professor; (Stryker & Burke, 2000; Stryker & Serpe, 1982), social categories or group memberships e.g. gender or ethnicity; (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), or personal identities such as attributes, skills and talents, traits or competencies (E. T. Higgins, 1987). That is when responding to the question "who are you?" an individual's response may include any of the societal, social or personal identities, such as "Doctor, Australian, woman, employee, mother, competent, creative, witty", among others. Other than the more visible and (relatively) stable identities such as our gender or race, many of our potential identities are subjectively determined (Thatcher, Doucet, & Tuncel, 2003). That is, to a large extent, individuals decide what makes up who we are. Indeed many scholars now recognize that an individual may self-identify with multiple, and overlapping identities (Blader, 2007; Thoits, 2003).

Thus, individuals have a number of identities available for 'activation' (Markus & Nurius, 1986), or salience in different contexts. Often subjective, these activated and salient identities guide information processing, affect, behavioral intentions, and thus our

responses to others in interpersonal situations (Rise, Sheeran, & Hukkelberg, 2010; Van Knippenberg, Van Knippenberg, De Cremer, & Hogg, 2004). Most researchers agree that individuals have various identities; some suggest that they are structured into an internal hierarchy of salience, with distinct identities probable to be invoked in a specified social scenario (Gecas, 1982). The individual has multiple internal identities; they face constant tension between their individual salient identities, and other's perceptions, categorizations, and expectations of them (Baumeister, 1982; E. T. Higgins, 1987). For example, to an individual in the context of a workgroup, some identities may be activated and salient (e.g. intelligent, competent, leader), while other identities (e.g. gender, mother, catholic) may become less salient. For example, a woman may describe herself outside job as a mother, a yoga enthusiast, and member of an environmental association, whereas she might see herself at the job as a leader and engineer. We concentrate on how women leaders define themselves and their colleagues define them in return in their work contexts (Meister et al., 2017).

What is internal identity asymmetry

Meister et al. (2012) proposes the term "internal identity asymmetry" based on prior research and identity theories in below figure 1, where arrow A explores what happens when an individual's salient self-identities (i.e. How I see myself) are misaligned with how they think others see them (i.e. How I think others see me) in the workgroup context . That is, internal identity asymmetry is the extent to which there is a discrepancy between an individual's view of themselves and the individual's perception of how others' see them.

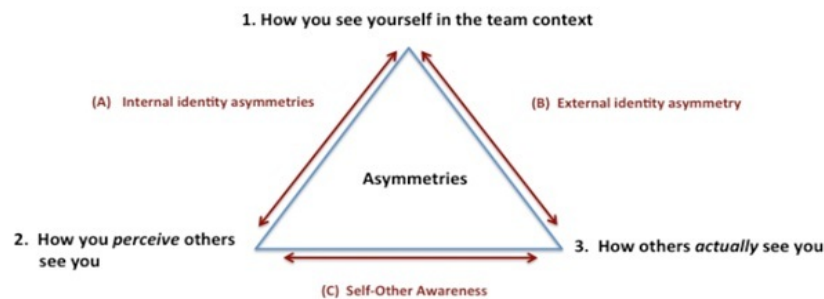


Figure 1: Internal identity asymmetries(Meister et al., 2012)

An Internal identities asymmetry may be associated with a particular identity (e.g., gender, role) or general experience in which individuals think that an important other (or 'other's ' maybe) misidentifies them. Therefore as a individuals who prefers to move in to a congruence between his / her internal visual and external opinions, (Swann Jr & Read, 1981; Swann Jr et al., 2003) to decrease cognitive dissonance (Abelson et al., 1968; Aronson, 1969) thus asymmetry is an uncomfortable or stressful experience.

Asymmetry created as intentionally or unintentionally

An individual could believe that for many reasons such as how the Asymmetry was created (e.g. whether the Asymmetry was intentional or unintentional) others misidentify the work-related identity of the particular individual. Asymmetry was created intentionally when the individual is actively engaged in impression management and self-presentation techniques to create the desired (rather than actual) professional image (Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Roberts, 2005). The individual may disguise parts of himself/herself so that can conform to a specific identity of an organization or group. When the individuals come to believe that others have an inaccurate view of their work-related identity, this will incite an internal cognitive dissonance (discomfort when an individual has contradictory cognitions; Abelson et al. (1968); Aronson, 1969) as they cope with disparate views of their work-related identity. As a result Individuals therefore inherently wish to see congruence between their inner self-view and their beliefs as to how others see them ; congruence gives them a sense that they can be predictable and that they have a coherent sense of self, reducing this cognitive dissonance (Swann Jr et al., 2009; Swann Jr et al., 2003). Whereas Research shows that Individuals often think they have an objective, reasonable and precise worldview (Robinson, Keltner, Ward, & Ross, 1995; Ward, Ross, Reed, Turiel, & Brown, 1997) and are likely to assume that other people regard it as they see themselves (Kenny & DePaulo, 1993) . Therefore, at work, individuals tend to believe that they acknowledge their work-related identity and that asymmetry detection may be unexpected or unintentional. Dissonance was related to enhanced psychological stress, tension, and decreases of well-being in people, and theoreticians suggest that individual basically want to solve inner inconsistencies (Sheldon & Kasser, 1995).

Theoretical background

In this section, we address prior and potential theories related to internal identity asymmetry and how individual experience and they respond accordingly. Internal identity asymmetry is considered as inter/intra individual tension faced in work-groups that has not yet been thoroughly explored in previous research of management field i.e. organizational group.

Identity theory: We describe internal identity asymmetry as the extent to which an individual believes others are misidentifying them while working. It is encountered when perceived a professional image of an individual (how she believes others see her; Roberts

2005) is misaligned with how she sees herself in the context of her work (her work-related identity; (Dutton, Roberts, & Bednar, 2010), she would experience internal identity asymmetry.

Internal identity asymmetry builds on and expands *self-discrepancy theory* (E. T. Higgins, 1987; E. Tory Higgins, Klein, & Strauman, 1985) by exploring a tension which is not thoroughly examined before. The discrepancy between how an individual self-identifies (actual self), and how they *think* others identify them. Furthermore, identity asymmetry extends this to the workgroup context in organizations, something not yet explored in previous self-discrepancy theory research.

The self-discrepancy theory explores internal identity asymmetry as “internal tension between different ‘selves’, and self-expectations which can arouse negative affect and emotional consequences (Bruch, Rivet, & Laurenti, 2000; Phillips & Silvia, 2005).

Image discrepancy research links misalignment between an individual’s desired image (i.e., how he desires to be seen) and perceived image (i.e., how he thinks he is seen) to heightened impression management, decreased well-being, impaired performance, and strained interpersonal relationships (E. T. Higgins, 1987; Roberts, 2005; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004; Vough, Cardador, Bednar, Dane, & Pratt, 2013). For example, Vough and her colleagues (2013) found that when professionals believe that their clients view their professional role inaccurately; this comes with emotional costs, decreased productivity, and strained relationships.

Self-verification research shows that if an individual is not actually validated in his or her self-view, it may bring about confusion, self-questioning, uncertainty, and a lack of intimacy in their relationships (Burke & Stets, 1999; Swann Jr, 1990; Swann Jr, Polzer, Seyle, & Ko, 2004). This research also links increased congruence in the workplace to outcomes such as employee satisfaction, creativity, commitment, turnover, and performance (Polzer, Milton, & Swann Jr, 2002; Polzer, Swann, & Milton, 2003; Swann Jr et al., 2009; Thatcher & Greer, 2008). Although this previous work shows that asymmetry is a negative experience that individuals seek to resolve, there are gaps in our understanding of this phenomenon

Interpersonal congruence study primarily focuses on external identity asymmetry—the actual discrepancy between an individual’s self-views and others’ views of the individual. The concept of internal identity asymmetry shows that, whether asymmetries exist or not (actually exist), it does have the greatest potential impact because the asymmetry is activated.

Meta-accuracy research (the degree to which people have an accurate understanding of how they are seen) shows that people are not always accurate about how they are seen by others (Carlson, Vazire, & Furr, 2011; Kenny, 1994; Santuzzi, 2007). This is because people often determine how others view them not only from the external feedback but also from their internal self-perceptions, observations of their own behavior, or even assumptions how others may think about them (Ames, 2004; Frey & Tropp, 2006; Kenny & DePaulo, 1993).

In Workgroup processes Research Individual perception plays a major role in determining reactions and behavior for both individuals (and working group) (Gibson, Cooper, & Conger, 2009; Jehn et al., 2010). for example, Researchers have found that perceived (not actual) diversity in workgroups has an impact on helping behaviour (Van Der Vegt & Bunderson, 2005), work team involvement (Hobman, Bordia, & Gallois, 2003), and individual perceptions of conflict (Hobman et al., 2003).

External identity asymmetry was investigated by previous research and theory. Research in self-verification theory (De La Ronde & Swann Jr, 1998; Swann Jr et al., 2009) shows that there is potential for a positive impact on both individual and group outcomes as far to the extent of a congruence between an individual's self-perceiving and an actual perception of others (see arrow B in Figure 1) (Polzer et al., 2002; Swann Jr, 1983).

For instance, if our workgroup member understands the importance of our individual identities, creativity, satisfaction and absenteeism within this workgroup context may be influenced (Thatcher & Greer, 2008). studies focused on discrepancies rather than congruities, such as a categorization threat, this can have negative effects such as anger if individuals are categorized or labeled incorrectly by other such as in social categories, e.g. gender or ethnicity (Barreto & Ellemers, 2003; Barreto, Ellemers, Scholten, & Smith, 2010).

While previous studies in interpersonal congruence consider the discrepancy between an individual’s self-views and the actual views of others, they neglect this important intrapersonal component.

Internal and external identity asymmetry

There is a difference between internal identity asymmetry and external identity asymmetry. *Internal identity asymmetry* has encountered the discrepancies between one’s work-related identity with the perceived professional image (how others saw them at work; Roberts, 2005). Whereas *External identity asymmetry* examines discrepancies between an individual’s work-related identities (how they identify themselves in the workplace) and how others actually see an individual at work.

Internal identity asymmetry may thus exist without the presence of external identity asymmetry; despite the fact that people may believe that their identities have been mistaken. Whereas External identity asymmetry is an individual’s perception, or belief that the asymmetry exists, that makes it important, previous interpersonal congruence related literature (Polzer et al., 2002; Swann Jr, Milton, & Polzer, 2000; Thatcher & Greer, 2008) neglected this intrapersonal aspect.

Past research shows that how individuals *believe* others see them is not always congruent with how they are *actually* seen by others (DePaulo, Kenny, Hoover, Webb, & Oliver, 1987; Kenny & DePaulo, 1993; Santuzzi, 2007). Thus, *internal identity asymmetry* is not always congruent with external identity asymmetry. *External identity asymmetry* may be irrelevant until it is acknowledged and identified by the individual. This is an important distinction because it is individuals' beliefs about others' intentions (or views of them, in this case) that influence their effect, behavior, and social interactions (Burns & Vollmeyer, 1998; King, Kaplan, & Zaccaro, 2008).

Women leadership & internal identity asymmetry

Prior researches indicated that minorities (such as women in leadership) have difficulty with the claiming professional identities or roles that are regarded as legitimate or credible professionals (Bartel & Dutton, 2001; Clair, Humbert, Caruso, & Roberts, 2012). Despite the way, a woman might see herself, as gender is often prominent for others around her as women in such positions are scarce and leader expected to be men (Alice Hendrickson Eagly, Eagly, & Carli, 2007; A. H. Eagly & Karau, 2002; Ely, 1995). Typically, females and leaders have dramatically different features and conduct. More community-based behavior for females: warming and nurturing, caring and cooperative and selfless is prescribed by gender role stereotypes (Alice H Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000). On the other hand, successful leaders often have and need to be assertiveness, direction, competitiveness, and problem-solving (Martell, Parker, Emrich, & Crawford, 1998). When women act – or thinks she will – in a way that is inconsistent with the significance of being a woman or leader, her identity dispute may be a threat (Petriglieri, 2011) to either her gender or identity as a leader. Subsequently, they may feel under pressure to invest thought, time and effort to manage the perceptions of other's and to develop responses to cope to navigate this experience (Bell & Sinclair, 2016; Meister et al., 2014; Swann Jr et al., 2009). For example, Sheryl Sandberg, CEO of Facebook, describes in her recent national bestseller, the process of dropping out what she calls her "all-work persona" and bringing her 'whole self' to work (Sandberg, 2013). Her persona was the mask she wore when introduced herself to others at work; her selective identity such as her personal relationship status is hidden while others are emphasized like her professional competence and abilities. The belief that her colleagues could access their "true identity" is a turning point in her career that affects both her opportunities and her overall sense of achievement at work.

Moreover, women in leadership positions often encounter increased physical visibility & examination of their bodies and despite how a woman self-identifies at work, she is unable to afford these identities around her and thus tends to experience internal identity asymmetry. Meister et al. (2017) explained that women were most probable to experience internal identity asymmetry throughout their careers during personal and professional identity transitions. The factors related to time (e.g. tenure and the age of a woman) and power (e.g. formal authority) played an important role—both affecting women's subjective experience and responding to internal identity asymmetries.

Consequences of internal identity asymmetry: Positive & negative

Our beliefs about what others think of us have been shown to strongly influence on our behavior and interactions (Burns & Vollmeyer, 1998; Barry R Schlenker, 1980; B. R. Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Therefore it is crucial to consider this from the perspective of the individual when examining identity asymmetry.

Self-discrepancy theory shows that internal tensions between different 'selves', and self-expectations can arouse negative affect and emotional consequences (Bruch et al., 2000; Phillips & Silvia, 2005). Further, the greater the magnitude of the difference between the various selves, the greater will be the intensity of the outcome. For example, discrepancies between self-views (e.g. I am a writer) and thoughts of how *ideally* others would like you to be (e.g. I think my parents ideally want me to be a lawyer) lead to feelings of dejection-related emotions such as shame, embarrassment, or feeling downcast (E. T. Higgins, 1987).

Previous researches: Incongruent experiences & consequences

Previous research indicates that incongruent experiences have detrimental consequences, while this prior work shows that asymmetry is a negative experience that individual try and solve, we still have gaps in our understanding.

Incongruous experiences regarding the identity of an individual have toxic effects, such as a self-oriented, other adverse impact increased anxiety, stress decline in overall well-being and health (Barreto & Ellemers, 2003; Barreto et al., 2010).

As for image (an externally focused public persona; Roberts, 2005), discrepancies between the required and perceived the external image of an individual were related to decreases in psychological health and strained interpersonal relationships (Roberts, 2005; Vough et al., 2013).

Interpersonal congruence research links increased workplace congruence with results, i.e. Creativity, turnover, performance, satisfaction and interpersonal relationship quality (Polzer et al., 2002; Swann Jr et al., 2000; Thatcher & Greer, 2008).

Self-verification research indicates that an individual's self-view is not validated, it can cause confusion, self-questioning, and uncertainty (Burke & Stets, 1999; Swann Jr, 1990; Swann Jr et al., 2004). Such identity processes have important impacts on individuals and relations of their work, but in the organizational context, they remain relatively unexplored (Swann Jr et al., 2009).

Internal identity asymmetry is an inevitable and significant tension in the organizational workgroups of individuals. Internal identity asymmetries, depending on how they are evaluated: as a threat or challenge, can have both constructive and destructive outcomes. It is therefore crucial that leaders and employees alike learn these interpersonal identity processes so that the individual, the group, and the organization, can achieve constructive rather than destructive outcomes (Meister et al., 2012).

According to Biopsychosocial model, When individuals have less personal resources to meet the demands of the positions or experience in this situation, they are threatened (Blascovich & Mendes, 2000; Blascovich & Tomaka, 1996), whereas When individuals have personal resources to meet the demands of the situation this will lead to challenging responses (Blascovich & Mendes, 2000; Blascovich & Tomaka, 1996; Tomaka, Blascovich, Kelsey, & Leitten, 1993).

Identity threats have been defined as “experiences appraised as indicating potential harm to the value, meanings, or enactment of an identity” (Petriglieri, 2011). When individuals are classified inappropriately by others, this can elicit a range of negative emotions and behaviors such as fear, frustration, or anger (Barreto & Ellemers, 2003; N. Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002). individuals perceive the potential for loss, and rarely anything to be gained from the situation (Tomaka et al., 1993).

Whereas positive affect and attitudes that accompany a challenge-response would encourage individuals to feel more safe, open and trusting in the group, a more positive outlook on the situation (Tomaka et al., 1993). Naomi Ellemers and Barreto (2006) found that When individuals were categorized as positive and challenged, positive emotions were elicited (feeling happy, proud, confident, strong, and satisfied).

Self-discrepancy theory (E. T. Higgins, 1987), intra-individual tensions may cause individuals to experience negative affect and emotion. Punishment, rejection, or negative responses (E. T. Higgins, 1987) agitation-related emotions, such as fear, feeling threatened or feelings of presentment.

Meister et al. (2012) propose that when an individual evaluates an internal identity asymmetry as a threat, this will lead the individual to perceive higher amounts of relationship conflict relative to others in the workgroup. On the other side, when an individual assesses the internal identity asymmetry as a challenge, this will influence the individual to perceive more task conflict than others in the group.

In relation to the previous literature, it is suggested that internal identity asymmetry does not always have to be a bad experience. There has been very little research into whether and when internal identity asymmetry is positive. If, for instance, a person does not think of herself as a leader, but thinks her manager sees her as a leader, it may be a positive asymmetry that she would like to maintain.

We study the concept that incongruence results such as internal identity asymmetries may have *positive* outcomes. Theories of stress and coping (Susan Folkman & Lazarus, 1985; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) suggest that an individual’s cognitive assessment of internal identity asymmetry critically influences an individual’s coping response and the result of this reaction is either positive or negative.

Theories of stress and coping indicate that when confronted with a stressor (an internal identity asymmetry), individuals are assessed by means of the two-component cognitive process: primary and secondary appraisal (Susan Folkman & Lazarus, 1985; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Smith & Kirby, 2009). Individuals evaluated primarily whether asymmetry is relevant for their well-being and future objectives. In a secondary evaluation, individuals evaluate how asymmetry could be managed.

These appraisal processes occur simultaneously and converge to determine whether the overall asymmetry is relevant for the wellbeing of individuals and if it is threatening (containing the possibility of future harm or loss) or challenging (containing the possibility of future benefit or gain; S. Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, and Gruen (1986)). After this initial appraisal of the asymmetry, individuals will engage in a maintenance or resolution coping response. Regardless of their intentions, asymmetry constitutes a potential stressor, and individuals follow the process of cognitive assessment.

Asymmetry is, therefore, an inconvenient or stressful experience. Despite this, some asymmetries may be seen as highly negative, and others as positive or aspiring (Ibarra, 2015), and this assessment directs the probable response and outcome (Meister et al., 2014). While every person in the organization faces internal identity asymmetry, but women confront a unique set of challenges. The challenges of negotiating, claiming and being given leadership identities in a society that has traditionally designed leadership as a masculine endeavor in particular (A. H. Eagly & Karau, 2002; Sinclair, 2011), are women leaders who often are classified as women first and women leaders second (Scott & Brown, 2006).

Coping strategies for internal identity asymmetry

The coping process involves an individual's endeavors to resolve or handle external or internal occurrences that may be stressful and taxing, such as internal identity asymmetry (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Intentionally and unintended, internal identity asymmetry is likely to be an uncomfortable, possibly stressful experience that individual handle with diverse cognitive and behavioral responses (Aronson, 1969; W. B. Swann & Hill, 1982; Swann Jr, 1983). While a person has a fundamental desire for congruence (Swann Jr, 1983), it suggests that there are circumstances where the individual maintains an asymmetry rather than resolve (Meister et al., 2014).

There is a number of cognitive and behavioral strategies are thus employing by an individual to try to resolve & maintain an internal identity asymmetry. How cognitive appraisal of an internal identity asymmetry affects an individual's preferred response and the positive or negative results of that response.

Incorporating *cognitive appraisal theories* of stress and coping (Susan Folkman & Lazarus, 1985; S. Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen, & DeLongis, 1986; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), Meister et al. (2014) explore that three moderating characteristics in the appraisal process of an internal identity asymmetry direct an individual's coping response: importance, asymmetry, mutability, and valence. The first factor to take into account is an individual's appraisal of the asymmetry's relevance to his or her future well-being (importance). If important, the individual will consider whether he or she has agency in resolving it (asymmetry mutability) and whether this asymmetry is potentially harmful to future well-being (negative valence) or potentially beneficial. By incorporating these moderating characteristics, we can uncover the contextual and individual characteristics that distinguish internal identity asymmetries from one another, and we can explore the positive side of asymmetry. In result, individuals may want to maintain an asymmetry rather than resolve it only, and asymmetry experiences can be positive and have positive results for individuals and their relationships at work.

Behavioral strategies such as confront others directly to counter the perceived asymmetry (Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007), or restrict interaction with those who believe they verify their identity (Swann Jr et al., 2003). For example, a woman who believes others at work see her as a "woman" can actively try to make a difference by an attempt to "hide" or mask their gender, or by interacting exclusively with men (Ely, 1995). Sandberg (2013) said, "one old banking manager tell me she had been wearing her hair ten years in a bun because she wanted nobody to see she was a lady".

These behavioral techniques may assist women to believe that they have modified others' perceptions, and can also favor the processing of information to "hear" only or to "see" evidence to confirm the achievement of such behavioral methods (Swann Jr et al., 2003).

Meister et al. (2017) presented a process response model when women were confronted with a significant internal identity asymmetry. These include deliberate and planned cognitive and behavioral responses, and less sensitive cognitive, discursive, and organized into three phases: solve or reduce the asymmetry by influencing others or adapting oneself; endure the asymmetry and escape the asymmetry altogether.

According to a range of studies across the identity, self-verification and literature of impression management suggest that proximal coping responses fall within two broad categories: asymmetry resolution responses and asymmetry maintenance responses (Meister et al., 2014). Asymmetry can be resolved by Identity negotiation, Individuals attempt to bring others together through cognitive and behavioral adjustments in alignment with their stable self-views (Swann Jr et al., 2003; W. B. Swann & Hill, 1982; W. B. Swann, Jr., 1987).

While persons who deliberately develop internal identity asymmetries, for instance, can use maintenance strategies, use intense impression management agendas; trying to create, project and retain the desired image in social interactions; (Baumeister, 1982; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Barry R Schlenker, 1980) to maintain this "false" view. According to previous literature and studies following are the conditions when the individual have to resolve or maintain the asymmetry.

Resolve: An individual has two major strategies to resolve the asymmetry of an internal identity: adapting his internal working identity to his perception of how others view him or believe that others changed their perceptions to align themselves with his self-conceptions.

Adjust their internal work-related identity to align by *adding* an identity that previously did not exist to their set of salient work-related identities, or *removing* an identity from their work-related identities (e.g., Ibarra, 1999; Lemay & Ashmore, 2004) or *rearranging* their internal identity hierarchy so that a certain identity becomes more or less salient at work (Ashforth, Johnson, Hogg, & Terry, 2001; Ashforth et al., 2007).

Altered their perceptions to align with the individuals' self-views by Display identity cues, while attempted to communicate work-related identities to colleagues such as dressing in a way to reflect how they see themselves, decorating their office accordingly, or behaving in a way that demonstrates who they believe they truly are (Elsbach, 2004; Swann Jr, 1990; Swann Jr et al., 2003; Thatcher et al., 2003).

Involve more aggressive behavioral strategies, such as confronting others directly to counter the perceived asymmetry (Ashforth et al., 2007), or even limiting interaction to those people who they believe verify their identity (Swann Jr et al., 2003).

Maintain: An Individual attempts to project a desired, preferred, or required image of the self, rather than an accurate image. When individuals are suffering with an intense pressure to conform their organizational environment or workgroup; they believe that they need to uphold a false representation of themselves that might not be congruent with their internal work-related identities (Patricia Faison Hewlin, 2003; P. F. Hewlin, 2009).

Endure: There are circumstances where an individual must endure or accept an asymmetry, just to acknowledging but doing nothing to sustain or change it.

Ashforth et al. (2007) described in their research that it is necessary to “just deal with it. For example, a social service manager who learned to accept the fact that she could not alter certain events in her clients’ lives. An animal control officer who suggested that when dealing with occupational taint (i.e., when others have a negative view of a profession). These individuals had given up trying to change others’ perceptions and had learned to accept the way their profession was viewed.

Ignore: An individual will simply ignore the identity asymmetry altogether; this strategy will passively maintain the asymmetry through a lack of engagement with it.

Preposition 1: Internal identity asymmetries will have a positive impact when individuals employ coping strategies i.e. resolve, maintain & endure.

Key findings & discussion

In this section, we conclude our finding based on prior literature and researches: discuss various factors that may influence internal identity asymmetry which further may influence outcomes:

We examine how internal identity asymmetry may influence *outcomes* such as perceived person-environment fit, job satisfaction, and turnover would also be interesting to consider.

According to the experience of Gamble (2000), when individuals suffer negative experiences in the organization, the result may be dissatisfaction not only with work relationships but with the organization overall.

When individuals are unable to rectify an asymmetry over time or even the organization, they may indeed choose to leave the relationship or organization, in order to remove themselves from the potentially distressful asymmetry experience (Adams, 1963).

If however, the individuals have been able to resolve a positive valence asymmetry, they may believe that others—their peers, for example—see them in a positive way and that those others respect them. This may increase the individuals’ sense of fit in the environment (or, specifically, in the relationships in which they experienced the asymmetry).

The degree of fit individuals experience has been linked to factors such as satisfaction, performance, and tenure

Preposition 2: Internal identity asymmetry has a negative effect on employee well-being and performance when it remains unsolved.

Various factors may affect whether an individual has more or less asymmetry in an organization.

Motivation: There are certain conditions at work when a person is motivated to be more (or less) exact in the way it is seen (Kunda, 1990; Neuberg & Fiske, 1987).

Similar others: Individuals believe that they are more transparent in their true identities than others like them (Ames, 2004; Vorauer & Kumhyr, 2001). Similar others are more aware of their identities and less likely to experience asymmetry within their identity.

Organizational environments causing intensive pressure to conform (P. F. Hewlin, 2009) can also enhance the internal identity asymmetry of individual because they believe in projecting an image that is inconsistent with their true selves.

Self-efficacy influences how an individual appraises the asymmetry with regard to its mutability and valence. An individual with a low level of self-efficacy might think that he or she cannot resolve and find it immutable. Individuals with a low level of self-esteem (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991) may have experienced internal identity asymmetry as a negative valence because they may allow any perceived asymmetry to damage the individual's own self-assurance and self-worth.

If the *self-esteem* of an individual is high, the asymmetry as positive valence (as a beneficial challenge) because high self-esteem people think that they can overcome barriers (Brockner, 1988).

Tenure: When an individual has been working only for a brief period, he or she is more apt to experience internal identity asymmetry because meta-perceptions are less precise when an individual becomes familiar (Carlson et al., 2011).

Relationship: Individuals enter into new relationships by creating their own identities so they know what to expect and how to behave with each other (Swann Jr et al., 2009). Individuals are interested in and concerned with how others perceive, evaluate, judge and attempt to affect the perception of others (Goffee & Jones, 2005; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Swann Jr, 1983).

360-degree feedback: When employees participate in 360-degree feedback tools, which helps them to reduce internal identity asymmetries, including meta-perceptive analysis (how I believe others see me). This 360-feedback tool mainly focuses on external or actual identity asymmetries (“how others actually see you” versus “how you see yourself”). It can help to distort the negative consequences of some forms of asymmetry when individuals emphasize how they believe others do not really see them.

Preposition 3: Time and tenure can influence both internal identity asymmetry experiences and how these are evaluated.

Preposition 4: 360-degree feedback will mediate the relationship between Internal identity asymmetry and employee output i.e. employee well being and performance.

A *conceptual model* is suggested based on previous researches; the relationship between individual experiences of internal identity asymmetry and their output i.e., employee well being & performance with mediating variable of coping strategies and 360-degree feedback is illustrated in figure 2.

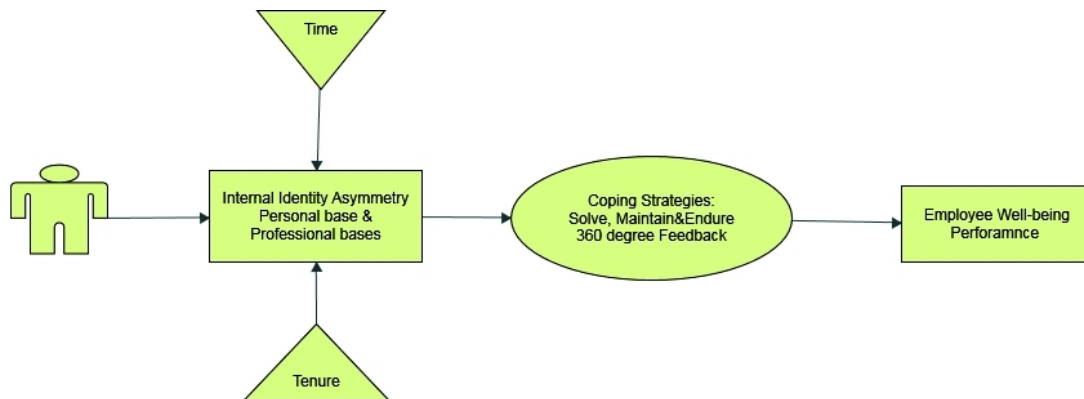


Figure 2: Conceptual model

Conclusions

In order to achieve study objectives, our paper has presented a theoretical and conceptual model by integrating the concept of internal identity asymmetry with their proximal coping responses and consequences. We incorporated a broad range of research across identity, self-verification, impression management, and Meta perception literature to answer the question of what are internal identity asymmetries and when it is observed and how individuals perceive misidentification at the workplace.

Self-verification theorists highlight the cognitive and behavioral strategies that individuals may employ to resolve an asymmetry, they rarely give heed to the conditions under which individuals may desire or required to maintain an asymmetry, and how they might do so. We incorporate cognitive theories of stress and coping (Susan Folkman & Lazarus, 1985; S. Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, et al., 1986; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), in order to understand which of the proximal coping responses an individual is likely to employ. We also examined the positive side of asymmetry, suggesting that under certain conditions an asymmetry may indeed lead to positive outcomes for individuals and their relationships at work. Previous studies exploring the outcomes of being misidentified and they have focused primarily on the negative outcomes of incongruence. This assumes that the experience of incongruence or asymmetry has been interpreted as negatively valence or threatening. We consider the role of threat and challenge in influencing the impact of asymmetry. That is, whether internal identity asymmetry will impact an individual's perception depends on how the asymmetry is evaluated.

In this article, we summarize all the previous theories and research defining the concept of internal identity asymmetry. We presented the conceptual model for our future research to examine the relationship of Internal identity asymmetries with their outcome i.e. employee well being and performance. The internal and external factor could be discussed with the role of mediating variable i.e. coping strategies and 360-degree feedback. This empirical research would reveal the actual findings; this is the main contribution to the management research that has not been scrutinized before.

In this article, we have focused on unpacking the experience of internal identity asymmetry and describing an individual's proximal responses and outcomes. In the future, we would like to use this conceptual grounding to explore both antecedents to internal identity asymmetry and its appraisal, as well as distal outcomes that may have important organizational consequences.

Past studies highlight the negative effect of internal identity asymmetry although they slightly discussed the positive side but it's not fully discovered yet. This is the gap for future research and could focus on the positive side of internal identity asymmetry. Future we will explore the situations when it would be positive or how women leaders make it as positive and maintain this positive asymmetry for the long term.

External identity asymmetry would, therefore, be interesting to examine how internal identity asymmetry aligns with how others 'actually' see the individual, in reality. Are there some individuals who are perpetually wrong in how they feel others view them? Are the more effective, or successful leaders in organizations those who have a more accurate understanding of how their subordinates, peers or supervisors see them?

When identity asymmetries capture or noted at many points in time, this helps researchers understand how it may change, evolve, or remain a relatively stable variable for certain individuals. E.g. start of a career or mid or at the end of the career.

How different asymmetrical experiences with respect to an individual's salient work-related identities might lead to different outcomes. For example, how do individuals cope with internal identity asymmetries? What are the conditions under which an individual will seek to maintain rather than resolve an asymmetry? Under what circumstances might asymmetries lead to positive rather than negative outcomes?

It would also be interesting to discuss a different kind of culture of organizations, e.g. working environment. How different kinds of working environments can affect the perception of the individual for their colleagues. For instance in a positive and healthy working environment or culture how individual view their selves and perceive about their colleague's views and How come they get misidentified.

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